

The United Church Dorchester

Annual Report

January to December 2017

Charity registration number:1137996

Location: 49-51, Charles Street, Dorchester,
Dorset DT1 1EE

1. The Charity: its constitution, organisational structure and governance.

The United Church Dorchester was formed in 1978 by the coming together of the former South Street Methodist and South Street United Reformed congregations as a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership under the sponsorship of “Churches Together in Dorset”, the county ecumenical forum. It originally received its charity status indirectly as a result of its membership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, themselves both independent charitable bodies. However, following changes to Charity Law, the United Church Dorchester adopted its own written constitution and registered with the Charity Commission in 2010 as a charitable unincorporated body. (Registered Charity Number: 1123239).

1.1 The Purpose of the Charity

The purpose of the Charity is to advance the Christian faith in Dorchester and its surroundings in accordance with the principles and practices of the Methodist and United Reformed churches

To achieve its purpose, the Charity will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- a. the celebration of public worship;
- b. the teaching of the Christian faith.
- c. mission and evangelism;
- d. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- e. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and
- f. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.

- g. maintaining the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

1.2 Membership

Membership of the United Church Dorchester is open to anyone who formally accepts the Faith and Practice of the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church with regard to Baptism and Reception into Membership. Our current membership is 215. During the year, sixteen people were welcomed to the Church through transferred membership and 7 members died. Another 129 people are regular worshippers but have not chosen to be members.

1.3 The Council of Stewards and organisational structure

The Council of Stewards is the trustee body of the church. This group constitutes the legally responsible body of the charity. Trustees, called Stewards, are elected, from the membership by church members at the Annual General Meeting. A Steward is appointed for an initial period of three years; the period of office can be extended by a further year after which time the steward must stand down for at least one year before being eligible for re-election. The Ministers are ex-officio members of the Council. We have no policies adopted for the induction and training of trustees. However, our current procedure is to give every new trustee a bound folder containing information on our constitution, the role of a trustee and the management structure of the organisation.

The Council of Stewards meets approximately every six weeks. The chair of the Council, the Senior Steward, is elected from within the Council, along with the treasurer and secretary. (Currently the Treasurer's position is confirmed annually by a 75% agreement at the AGM since he has served longer than the standard 4 year term) The Council of Stewards (i.e. the Trustees) is responsible for administering and managing the Church in support of its Vision. It supports and advises the Ministers in promoting the whole mission of the United Church and the wider Church in its teaching of the Christian faith and in its pastoral, evangelistic, social, ecumenical and charitable work. The Council is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the United Church buildings, owned by the United Reformed Church, at numbers 49 and 51 Charles Street, Dorchester.

The Church meeting, which can advise the Stewards' Council, meets at least 4 times a year. Much of the day-to-day management of the church is delegated to nine major committees (Worship; Pastoral and Fellowship; Youth and Family; Community

Service; Home and World Mission; Finance; Property; Lettings; Outreach; and Administration) and their constituent subgroups, which report regularly to the Stewards' Council, and to Church Meetings. The sub-committees have delegated authority to make routine decisions related to their remit and may have a budget allocated to such ends. Decisions requiring extra funding for any items outside the usual scope of the committee are referred to the Stewards who may decide to seek advice from the church meeting. The Ministers, Senior Steward and Secretary meet regularly to review needs, progress plans and co-ordinate future date planning.

1.4 The Council of Stewards (Trustees) who served during 2017 comprised:

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| Our Ministers | Revd Stephanie Jenner Revd Peter Clark |
| Stewards who stood down at AGM in March 2017 | Penny Fennell (Retiring Chair of the Council of Stewards) Paul Smith Paul Wallis |
| Stewards who served all Year (Management Sub-committee membership shown in brackets) | Colin Gannaway - Treasurer (Finance, Lettings) Alexandra Reed (Youth and Family) Roni Boyden (Pastoral) |
| New Stewards Elected at AGM in March 2017 | Mary Martin – Senior Steward & Chair of the Council of Stewards (Community Service, Home & World Mission) John Hilton – Church Secretary (Worship) Heather Bland (Outreach) Carol Illingworth (Administration) Gillian Daniel (Finance) John Saunders (Property) Sue Bird (An observer representing the Bridport & Dorchester Methodist Circuit) |

1.5 Staff members

Joint Minister : Rev Stephanie Jenner, 70%

Joint Minister - Rev Peter Clark, 30%

Administrative Assistant – Mrs June Faulkner - 10 hours per week

Pastoral Visitor: Mrs Angela Fisher 8 hrs per week. (employed by the Circuit)

1.6 Senior Volunteer Managers:

Although we have paid members of staff the church is mainly managed by volunteers. Key post holders include:

Senior Steward – Mary Martin

Secretary – John Hilton

Treasurer – Colin Gannaway

Pastoral Care – Wendy Hilton

Property - Paul Smith

Lettings – Dennis Janes

Coffee Shop Manager – Shirley Hood

Church Shop Manager – Marion Cox

1.7 Relationships with Related parties:

The United Church Dorchester and the Bridport United Church are in the same (Bridport and Dorchester) Methodist circuit and are combined into a joint pastorate by the URC. As a result the Rev Stephanie Jenner (a Methodist minister based in Dorchester) and the Rev Peter Clark (a URC minister based in Bridport) are joint ministers of the two churches. Rev Jenner spends 70% of her time in work for the United Church Dorchester and Rev Clark 30%.

The United Church Dorchester retains its links to both parent bodies through the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church and the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. It is also an active member of Dorchester Churches Together and seeks to work closely with other churches in the community

2. Public Benefit Statement, Achievements and Performance

When planning our activities for the year, the Ministers and the Stewards' Council have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. Our main objective is to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our church community through:

1. the celebration of public worship;
2. the teaching of the Christian faith;
3. mission and evangelism;
4. pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
5. the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs;
6. the support of other charities in the UK and overseas;
7. the maintenance of the fabric of the United Church and associated buildings in order to facilitate all these activities.

2.1 The celebration of public worship

2.1.1 As a Christian Community, the United Church welcomes everyone because God loves all people. We value our diversity. Whatever our age, background, culture, gender or race, we each have something special to share with others and the Stewards' Council is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church. The Stewards' Council maintains an over-view of our worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within Dorchester and its surroundings. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

2.1.2 The Church provides a variety of worship styles at different times throughout the week.

2.1.3 Over the year, the 10.30am Sunday morning services have been led by our Ministers, (incumbent or retired) and accredited lay preachers. The typical

weekly congregation is about 150 worshippers. The format for Sunday mornings is flexible with a mixture of traditional and modern hymns and songs. Hymns and worship songs are led by a variety of singers from the choir and/or the singing group with musical accompaniment from a traditional organ, piano, a music group with woodwind and stringed instruments and/or the brass group. The choir practises weekly to support congregational singing in worship and performs anthems and other items, and an informal singing group offers the opportunity for anyone to learn new worship material. There is always the opportunity for children and young people to take part in worship both with the adult congregation and in their own Junior Church worship. The sacrament of communion is included in one 10.30 service a month, usually the first Sunday.

- 2.1.4** Sunday evenings tend to follow a more traditional format with a smaller, but faithful congregation of between 25 and 35 worshippers. However during the year it can include a variety of forms of worship, such as: reflective (Taize) style, Celtic style, traditional healing and wholeness and songs of praise. Irrespective of the form of worship a service of communion is included in one service a month, usually the third Sunday.
- 2.1.5** On the second Sunday in the month, an early morning communion service is held at 9.00am. On the fourth Sunday evening of the month an “Encounter” service is held, focussed on the young and young at heart, with a different emphasis each month, for example Arty Party or Bible Banter. These services last thirty minutes and are always followed by a bring-and-share tea. Encounter replaces the 6.30pm service on that day.
- 2.1.6** A short, twenty minute service is held on Wednesday morning to coincide with the town’s Market Day and is accompanied with refreshments and stalls in the Hall. Typically about 30 people attend the service and, although most are regular Church goers (though not necessarily from the United Church), a few, who would see themselves as non-church goers, regularly attend.
- 2.1.7** As well as continuing to offer our regular services during the main festive periods at Easter and Christmas, we have additional, special services and activities during these celebrations. . We also offer, jointly with other churches in the town, a number of ecumenical services during the week of prayer for Christian Unity, Bible Sunday, Remembrance Sunday and others.
- 2.1.8** This year in Holy Week we hosted the interactive Journey to the Empty Tomb which encourage many visitors to reflect on the events of Easter. A church family meal was also held. On Good Friday the annual Churches Together walk of witness began at the Catholic Church and ended at United Church where,

after a service, fellowship was shared over drinks and hot cross buns. All these celebrations culminated in a dawn service on Easter day at a local green space on the edge of town, a notorious spot in days gone by for executions. Breakfast was supplied afterwards back at the church Hall before the celebration of a family service for Easter.

2.1.9 Over the Christmas period, we offered a variety of services: a Christingle Service for the very young and young at heart; a Quiet Christmas service for those who could not cope with a loud and busy service, such as those suffering from Dementia and those going through bereavement; a candle lit carol service; midnight communion on Christmas eve and a short, Christmas morning service. Collections from these services were split between two charities: Christian Aid and Action for Children (£313 each).

2.1.10 Two church groups meet regularly for reflective prayer and meditation.

2.2 Teaching of the Christian faith

2.2.1 The Church has a number of house groups that meet regularly to explore the Word as expressed in the Bible, through discussion and conversation,. During Lent 2017, the theme was "Making Good Sense of the Bible Together".

2.2.2 A key objective of our Junior Church is to educate our young people in the basis of our Faith. Most Sunday mornings they share in part of the main service before leaving for their own sessions but once a month meet separately as First Steps for their own worship and activity time with their parents and carers.

2.3 Mission and evangelism

2.3.1 This year the church hired a space at the Dorset County Show. The team provided refreshments, baby changing and feeding facilities, games and information. A similar facility was provided in the church in the week running up to Christmas, offering an open door onto South Street for a few hours each day to anyone in the town wanting respite from the commercial activity and facilities to feed and change babies.

- 2.3.2** Prior to that, over a period of three weeks in December, we repeated the 'Journey to the Stable' which was visited by an increased number of school children and members of the public. There was a, now traditional, sheep trail around the town with fourteen shops hosting a felt sheep in their window for children to find. The sheep making involved a large working party of church volunteers who spent an afternoon together sewing and inventing names for the sheep. The events were widely publicised by giving balloons to passing people (particularly children) on the town "Cracker" night and on the first day of public opening.
- 2.3.3** The United Church staged the Journey to The Empty Tomb, an interactive experience during Holy Week. This consisted of seven stations offering an element in the passion of Christ to reflect on, ending with the final station, staged in the empty tomb. It was well received by members of UCD and visitors.
- 2.3.4** In the carnival atmosphere of the town's Christmas lights switch on (Christmas Cracker) we provided refreshments and mince pies. Music was provided by two of our talented pianists and the United Brass, an interdenominational brass group operating from our church. This brought many people of all ages into the church and they stayed to sing Carols and Christmas songs. A voluntary collection made £93.85 and donated to the local Poverty Action Group Charity.
- 2.3.5** The 'Story-Tots' group, run by a team of dedicated volunteers, meets once a week during term time. It continues to welcome babies and pre-school children and their carers who share a time of play together. We now have a regular group of at least ten carers/parents and often it is more. It is lovely to see Story-Tots thriving. We would really like to welcome new volunteers so that the success can continue.
- 2.3.6** Members of the Church continue to be involved in the management and running of the Quiet Space in Poundbury.
- 2.3.7** Chaplaincy work in Dorchester continues. Chris Warren, one of our church members is Chaplain to Dorset Fire and Rescue and an official party of firefighters attended our Christmas Carol Service, with their fire engines parked nearby ready to respond to a call if needed. A number church members have responded to the call to be chaplains to retailers in the town under a Management Group overseen by Churches Together in Dorset.

2.3.8 The Church's window onto South Street, continues to show to passers-by something of the life and concerns of the Church with a frequently changing display.

2.3.9 Posters have been put up in many rooms as discussion starters and are currently being reviewed.

2.4 Pastoral work

2.4.1 The United Church maintains a system by which all members and adherents are assigned to a pastoral visitor, who tries to keep in touch with them and appreciate their concerns. As well as each member or adherent being assigned a visitor the visitors themselves are grouped under a number of co-ordinators, who look after the visitors' pastoral welfare. Training for pastoral visitors this year has included the topic of mental health issues. The pastoral visitors leaflet has been updated. All pastoral visitors attended safeguarding training.

2.4.2 A special welcome was given to recent new members to help provide them with information, the welcome pack was distributed which included the Church activities booklet.

2.4.3 Our Ministers offer 24/7 care for spiritual and emotional needs, Rev. Peter Clark (United Reformed Church Minister) from the Bridport Pastorate, offers 30% time and Methodist Superintendent Stephanie Jenner who is based at the United Church offers 70% of her time since she has responsibilities to other smaller churches in the area and a reciprocal arrangement with Bridport United Church. The Circuit, on behalf of the United Church, employs a Lay Pastoral Visitor who continues to support the Ministers in regular pastoral visiting and responding to needs as they arise.

2.4.4 In the spring a "Death Café" was organised. Groups involved with end of life issues were invited to have a stall, including a solicitor, funeral directors, woodland burials, Cruse bereavement counselling, Age UK Dorchester, Weldmar hospice and our own musical director and ministers. The objective was to allay fears and concerns about funeral planning held by the public. Coffee and chocolate cake lightened the mood, with a team from United Church's pastoral visitors hovering to oversee the morning and providing listening ears. It was felt to be a very positive morning where people could ask questions in a supportive and caring environment.

- 2.4.5** Another component of our pastoral care is the “Prayer Chain” where those in need, are remembered in prayer by a number of Church members, including those who are housebound. The Tuesday prayer group also keeps a list of people for whom prayer has been requested.
- 2.4.6** The Coffee Shop continues to be a hub of social activity, offering a listening ear and a friendly welcome to all. It opens up to four days a week and is manned by church volunteers and others from different walks of life. It now has a regular clientele, some of whom are either physically or mentally frail. They are well known to the staff and use the facilities as a place to come and feel at home. In addition to providing pastoral care to its customers the coffee shop also contributed £9,000 to church funds from profits made throughout the year.
- 2.4.7** A further opportunity for friendship is provided by a regular lunch time club called “Picnic People”. The Quiet Room and the Church itself are open daily for all to use for quiet prayer and reflection and as a place for quiet conversation.
- 2.4.8** As part of our pastoral support to the local community we provide comfort and support to the bereaved. The Ministers were involved in funerals throughout the year, not all of Church members. Monthly communion services continue to be held at two residential homes and one sheltered housing complex and, through our Pastoral Visitor and Ministers, we hold occasional services at three other locations in the town.
- 2.4.9** This year a small bereavement group was set up for mutual support for church members who had experienced a death during the year and for those who had held a funeral service at United Church.

2.5 Serving the local community

- 2.5.1** With its central location in the town, the United Church is ideally placed to offer itself as a reasonably priced venue for many events. The Regional Blood Transfusion Service runs well attended donor sessions regularly on our premises. The Dorchester Learning Centre occupied the Chelselbourne room and the Charminster room on the top floor. Unfortunately, following an internal risk review, DLC were saddened to have to offer their resignation; the review had highlighted a conflict in their safeguarding requirements and we were unable to offer them sole use of the premises. Our local Alcoholics

Anonymous group meets here four times a week finding the lack of alcohol on the premises, a result of our Methodist roots, a positive benefit.

- 2.5.2** A number of local charities receive advantageous rates for the use of rooms. In specific instances accommodation is provided free-of-charge. One such group is the bi-monthly Contact Centre where children can come to meet their non-resident parents, often under potentially confrontational circumstances.
- 2.5.3** Because of the good acoustics in the main church, The Church is used by a number of choirs for rehearsals and occasional concerts.
- 2.5.4** Grateful mention is given to Peter Mann who has now retired after managing all the bookings for many years. His role has been filled by our Admin Officer, June Faulkner (a paid member of staff), assisted by a Lettings Group, which was established during the year. The formation of this group was triggered by a change in status of the church with respect to letting out rooms. For many decades we let out rooms using our own systems but The Wessex Trust of United Reformed Church, who own our buildings, realised that, in fact, like all other URC churches, we had no authority to do so. As a result they have now delegated us powers to let rooms under strict conditions set by the URC. The lettings group was formed to make sure that we comply with URC requirements and to assist with some aspects of the lettings process.
- 2.5.5** We let rooms in our building to another Christian denomination, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, allowing others to celebrate public worship in a different way to our own traditions,
- 2.5.6** The Church Shop opens six mornings a week from 10.00am to 12.30pm and is manned by volunteers. It provides a wide range of Christian books, gifts and cards, and fairly traded goods, including food from Traidcraft. The shop window attracts passers-by into the church and customers come from a wide radius around Dorchester. Mrs Marion Cox, the shop manager retired at the end of this year after many years of service. Our thanks to her for all her work supporting the shop through the difficult early days and building it up to its present healthy state. The shop contributed £5,000 to church funds. As a Fairtrade Church and eco-congregation, good practice is actively promoted within the Church and more widely in our locality.

2.6 Support of other charities in the UK and overseas

2.6.1 The United Church has a continuing commitment to local, national and international charities through members working as volunteers and by donations of goods and money.

2.6.2 Locally the Church has supported, amongst others,:

- The Dorchester Poverty Action Group, through both direct donations and free use of rooms.
- The local food bank, for which the Church continues to be a collection point
- The Dorchester Child Contact Centre, which provides a safe environment for children of divided families to meet their non-resident parent for a few hours interaction in a safe and controlled environment. The church offers free accommodation and many of the volunteers are church members.
- Dorchester Alcoholics Anonymous Group, who appreciated the “dry” status of our buildings and who also receive accommodation at a much reduced rate.

2.6.3 We continue to give financial assistance to the Dorchester Support Group for Action for Children through a combination of personal giving via home collection boxes, the donation of both collections made at services over the Christmas period and the proceeds of a number of events held throughout the year, including an ever popular quiz night.

2.6.4 Internationally the Church is committed to relieving poverty and disaster and to funding development through the work of Christian Aid. The main focus of raising funds was through Christian Aid Week, most particularly the annual house-to-house collection and the Christian Aid Week market, an example of ecumenical cooperation, hosted by our Church. Members too volunteered for the street collection at the end of Christian Aid Week which has now become a regular fixture. The Lent Lunches also raised awareness of, Christian Aid and over £1000. The congregation at United Church alone raised nearly 25 per cent of the near £19,000 total amount raised in Dorchester.

2.6.5 A very successful Christian Aid Facebook account has now been established and we are in the process of developing an ecumenical Dorchester Christian Aid website.

2.6.6 Three United Church members of the ecumenical Dorchester Christian Aid Committee, Sheila Mann, Sue Gannaway and Malcolm Lewis, were presented

with Diamond awards for their service to mark the sixtieth anniversary of Christian Aid.

- 2.6.7** Church members have been heavily involved in other ecumenical events for Christian Aid. These have included: 'Share the Love', a well-attended event held in the Hall to which a number of similarly minded aid organisations were invited to raise funds and publicise their activities; a highly successful Quiz Night and the traditional Carol Singing on Christmas Eve.
- 2.6.8** Members of the Church have shown great generosity in their contributions both to regular collections and in other fund-raising activities. The Church's chosen charity in 2017 has been: Virtual Doctors, a charity providing the infrastructure to allow Health Assistants in African countries to access assistance from medical specialists across the world via their mobile phones. , Huw Jones, the founder of Virtual Doctors, introduced us to the work of this organisation in our World Church Sunday Service. To date £1323 has been raised for this cause.
- 2.6.9** The church has also been "twinning" its toilets with those in the third world to help build more hygienic and safer places to replace defecation in the open. £400 has been raised to twin 2 toilets and a toilet block with others in India and Africa.
- 2.6.10** Church members continue to be heavily involved in lobbying on such matters as climate change and tax justice through our Christian eco-group.
- 2.6.11** The Church continues to make a tremendous contribution to the fight against injustice and working to bring hope to the poorest and most powerless people in the world. Its' contribution to all Christian Aid activities provides an excellent example of commitment to cooperation with many of the other Dorchester churches.
- 2.6.12** The Church contributes to world mission through the World Mission fund of the Methodist Church and Council for World Mission (CWM) in the United Reformed Church.
- 2.6.13** As in previous years charitable donations have been made by the Coffee Shop by contributing from the regular "tips" box. This year's chosen charity was the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and £416.75 was donated.
- 2.6.14** The weekly market day stalls and coffee in the Hall have again distributed their proceeds to 18 local and national charities. Many of the Church social

groups also made donations towards Church expenses or their preferred charity.

2.7 Maintaining the fabric of the Church building

2.7.1 In September 2016, when the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee met at UCD some seven projects at UCD were considered, two being 'future' projects. It is disappointing that only one project, the works to the South Street doors, has been completed in 2017. Tenders for the new lift proved to be too expensive and having achieved detailed approval for the redecoration of the church itself the decorator decided not to accept the work. These projects will be continued next year.

2.7.2 A structural engineer surveyed to the loft space of No 51 Charles Street and was commissioned to design a simple structure to permit the removal of the cross beams to improve access throughout the loft. Details of the design are still to be received!

2.7.3 Some progress has been made on the repairs of the church spire. The Architect used generally by the church has taken responsibility to select suitable contractors and draft the necessary documentation. Our Structural Engineer will oversee the work.

3 Ecumenical Relationships

3.1 The United Church Dorchester has good working relationships with other Christian churches in the town. We are a member of Churches Together and take part in a number of joint church initiatives in the town.

3.2 Additionally, through the Quiet Space on Poundbury where several members of our congregation are volunteers, the Church actively contributes to and supports an ecumenical Christian presence in Dorchester. We continue to participate in the leading of prayers and worship at the Quiet Space and Sue Gannaway, a church member is trustee on our behalf.

3.3 This year the Church participated in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and we celebrated the Good Friday Walk of Witness, beginning at the Catholic Church with a service and ending at the United Church with a service followed by hospitality. Further ecumenical events supported by the Church included Peace Day in September and Cracker Night in December.

Other denominations joined us at our “Sonrise” service on Easter Sunday. We continue to seek ways to work with other churches in the town.

4 Staffing and Other Issues

- 4.1** Revd Stephanie Jenner, gives approximately two-thirds of her time to United Church, as she has three other small churches in her care, and is also Superintendent of the Bridport and Dorchester Methodist Circuit, and has District roles. She takes the lead in the planning of worship, in pastoral activity, in developing local networks such as Churches Together, and contributes to both business and other committees and groups in our church.
- 4.2** We continue to benefit greatly from the ministries of retired Ministers and lay leaders of many denominations who are part of our church and circuit.
- 4.3** Our URC Minister, Revd Peter Clark, continues to give about a third of his time to United Church Dorchester, leading worship, sharing leadership of one of our Fellowship groups and serving on the Council of Stewards. He also comes regularly to our Coffee Shop and makes himself available to church members and visitors alike.
- 4.4** This year the decision was also taken by the relevant trustee bodies that the Bridport and Dorchester Circuit will join with the Weymouth Methodist Circuit and the Portland Methodist Circuit to become a new circuit on 1st September 2018. Revd Stephanie Jenner will become the Superintendent Minister for this new circuit until at least 2020 and there will be a lot of hard work until then and beyond to ensure that the launch and work thereafter will be as smooth as possible.
- 4.5** Our pastoral visitor, employed by the Methodist Circuit, continues to work closely with the Ministers and pastoral team.
- 4.6** Our Admin officer carries out the routine administration of the lettings of rooms in the church buildings and carries out some administrative duties to assist the Church Secretary.
- 4.7** The majority of the work carried out by and in the United Church is done by volunteers. All aspects of church life require church members and friends to freely give of their time; from pastoral visiting, making sure services run

smoothly, fundraising for the charities we support and practical help such as the coffee shop, the church shop or Contact centre. Although we cannot accurately estimate the time given, it must amount to several hundred person hours per week.

5 Financial review

5.1 Reserves policy

The Church has a Reserves Policy, a requirement of the Charity Commission, to secure the future in case of unexpected or exceptional need.

Our reserves are held as unrestricted (freely available) funds which are ring-fenced from our budgeted annual commitments and planned expenditure. The Charity Commission suggests that we consider future planned expenditure, and possible risks and contingencies, including the possibility of a reduction in income of the Church. The Finance Committee has tried to strike a balance by taking the figure recommended by the Charity Commission, which is equivalent to six months' worth of our working capital to be held as reserves. Therefore it is necessary for us to hold an amount of at least 50% of the annual expenditure of the United Church as a sufficient reserve. Currently the general reserve is more than adequate to cover six months expenditure, currently £82k.

5.2 Restricted funds

5.2.1 Restricted funds and endowments, i.e. funds designated for a specific uses, are not included in the reserves. The Florence Fare Trust is an endowment, of which, only the interest may be used and must only be spent on Youth and Family work. There are two other small reserved funds: the outreach (mission) fund and the memorial fund. Both interest and capital may be used but only

on, respectively, outreach and items for use in or work carried out on the sanctuary area of the church. A final, medium term, restricted fund has been set aside by the church meeting to cover the costs of stabilising the church tower, which is in an unsafe condition. Structural studies are still ongoing prior to formation of a plan of action.

- 5.3** It is our policy to invest our fund balances between the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF), Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London. EC4V 4ET and the Trustees for the Methodist Church Purposes, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester. M1 1JQ.

5.4 Names and addresses of:

Bankers: HSBC 15, Cornhill, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1BJ.

Independent examiner – Mr Denys Hood, (address on application)

5.6 Risk Assessments

This year we have begun the process of building our risk management system to help us identify and manage the most significant risks to the United Church. By significant, we mean those that could stop us achieving our strategic objectives or have a significant detrimental impact on our ability to spread God's message by both word and deed. There is a range of possible impacts which needs to be considered such as financial, reputational and personal safety. The Trustees are ultimately responsible for risk management and we aim to introduce robust risk management processes during 2018 by ensuring that the most significant risks are identified and managed effectively.

5.7 Safeguarding

- 5.7.1** Safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse and children is taken very seriously by the Church Stewards. Two members of the congregation have been appointed to act as safeguarding officers for children and adults respectively and the church also takes the lead in the circuit for safeguarding.

- 5.7.2** The church has a robust and comprehensive safeguarding policy which is

displayed on the noticeboards of the church and on the website alongside the contact details for the two safeguarding officers. It is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. A programme of safeguarding awareness training is delivered regularly to all those in the church who work or volunteer with children and young people, and adults at risk of abuse. As part of this training we ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised. Training must be repeated every three years.

5.7.3 A Safer Recruitment policy is now in operation which requires that all staff in roles eligible for Disclosure and Barring clearance are required to apply.